

THE
W O N D E R

OF THE
Bishop of MEAUX

Upon Perusal of

Dr. B U L L's Books,

Consider'd and Answer'd.

*The Bishop of Meaux died at
Paris the 12th. April. 1704. in the
70th year of age. He was chief
minister to the Duke
of Burgundy &
the 40 Members of the
Academy & formerly Rector
of the University. A
Antagonist of Abp.
Tray. His name
Bossuet.*

I N a common News Paper, * which came but lately to
my Notice, I found part of a Letter from the Bishop
of Meaux, then at the General Assembly of the Clergy
of France in 1700, containing a just Character of the
Learned Dr. B U L L's Book, ~~Defence of the Faith of the~~
~~Council of Nice~~ with the Congratulation of the Clergy of that
venerable Assembly to him for it: to which he adds of his
own, what I shall here consider. It is as followeth in the Print.

* Post-Boy
No. 1280.

in title
Extra

I T is an admirable Performance, and the Subject he treats
of could not be explain'd with more Learning, nor with a
more thorough Knowledge of the Matter he handles, which I
desire you to acquaint him from me; and at the same time to
make him the sincere Congratulation of all the Clergy of France,
(met at this present in their General Assembly) for the Ser-
vice he has done the Catholick Church, in so well defending the

A

Judgment

2 *The Wonder of the Bishop of Meaux,
Judgment she hath declar'd, upon the Necessity of Believing
the Divinity of the Son of God.*

Give me leave to tell him, there is but one Thing I wonder at, which is, that so great a Man, who speaks so advantageously of the Church, of Salvation, which is only to be found in Unity with her, and of the Infallible Assistance of the Holy Ghost in the Council of Nice, which supposes the same Assistance for all such Assemblies in the same Church, can continue a Moment without Acknowledging her. Or else let him vouchsafe to tell me, who am a zealous Maintainer of the Doctrine he teaches, what 'tis he means by the words Catholick Church; Whether 'tis the Church of Rome, and those which adhere to her? Whether 'tis the Church of England? Whether 'tis a confus'd heap of Subjects separated one from another? And how they can be that Kingdom of Jesus Christ, not divided in it self, and which shall never fail? 'Twould be a great Satisfaction to me to have a Word of Answer upon this Subject, which may explain to me the Thoughts of so Weighty and Solid an Author.

The Publication of this Wonder of the Bishop's hath raised another Wonder here; Why the Learned Doctor hath not all this while given that great Satisfaction to so Learned and Eminent a Person, as he desires? Certainly no Learned Man of the Church of England can impute it to either want of just Matter, or want of Ability in so weighty and solid an Author; or hardly to any thing else than either want of Leisure, or want of Health, which required Assistance for the Publication of his own Works already written, and therefore permitted not a new Undertaking; or that he thought it so well done already by others, as makes it altogether needless. Nor is it to do him right, who is so well able to answer for himself, if he were not otherwise hinder'd, and thought it necessary, tho' heretofore my Neighbour and Friend; but upon other Considerations hereafter mention'd that I take this Occasion to write this.

It

It seems to me a thing of no less WONDER than that mention'd in the Letter, That so great a Man as the learned Bishop of *Meaux*, should suppose so little Difference between the *Catholick Church* at the time of the Council of *Nice*, and the *Roman Communion* now, as if the same, because they arrogate to themselves that Title, as the *Donatists* did heretofore, and exclude all the World besides: And no less again, that he should suppose that the *Assembly at Trent*, to say nothing of others, was such as that at *Nice*: And again no less, that he should suppose that the Decrees and Canons of that Assembly can be believed by any considerate, conscientious, unprejudic'd Person, to have been directed by the same *Assistance of the Holy Ghost*, by which the Council of *Nice* was; or to have that Evidence of Apostolick Tradition and Authority as is produc'd for that; and that so weighty and solid an Author can believe that *Salvation* is only to be found in Unity with that Church, in what was decreed at that Assembly. These are Supposals, which I suppose the Doctor is not obliged to grant: and being denied, I suppose the Bishop ought to prove before he can reasonably expect that great Satisfaction of an Answer. And till that be done, I suppose this sufficient Answer for his Supposals.

And as for his QUESTIONS, I must crave leave to tell him, 1. That there is so great Difference between the *Catholick Church* and *Catholick Communion*, that there may be a Breach of Communion in the *Catholick Church*, and yet both Parts continue *Members* of it; as there hath long been between the *Greeks* and *Latines*: And if both be in Fault, they are either both still *Members* of the *Catholick Church*, or there is no such Church in being now: But if both be not in Fault, it is certain the *Latines* are by their making *Additions* to the *Creed*, and *Imposing* them as Terms of Communion, contrary to the Decrees of Ancient General Councils, as that of *Ephesus*, alleadg'd by *Vincentius Lirinensis*, *Chalcedon*, and others afterwards, and the *Sentiments and express Declarations* of divers

4 *The Wonder of the Bishop of Meaux,*

eminent more ancient Christians; and Additions of such things as have neither *Scripture* nor *Apostolical Tradition* for their Belief; as *Transubstantiation*, *Prayers to Saints*, and the *Veneration of Images*, &c. These therefore are either no part of the Catholick Church, or but a corrupt one. So that the *Roman Catholick Church*, as it is commonly called here, cannot be the *true Catholick Church* in question.

2. That the Question, *Whether the Church of England be the Catholick Church*? seems to me not becoming either of the Persons; either so learned a Bishop to propose it at all, much less to so great an Author; or so weighty and solid an Author to take notice of it, unless with just Reflection, the only proper Answer.

3. That his Expression of a *Confused Heap* of Subjects, as the Print is, or Societies, as I am informed it should be, separate one from another, seems as indecent for such Parts of the Catholick Church of Christ; as will more plainly appear in what follows.

4. That the rest is more decent indeed; *How they can be that Kingdom of Christ not divided in it self, and which shall never fail*? but as easily answered. They may be *divided* in many respects, and yet, *holding the Head*, continue Members of the same Body; as there are divers *Differences* among those of the Roman Communion, both Churches, and Parties in them; and between the *Greeks* and *Latines*, as I noted before. But they all hold the Head; are not divided in the *Foundation*, which was expressly declared by our Lord and Saviour, and visibly laid by his Apostles, as appears by the Sacred Record of their Acts and their Epistles, to be one and the same, without any regard to that *Other Foundation*, which others have laid; nor divided in any Doctrine built upon it. And if they be divided in Communion, and Faults on both sides, and on the side of the *Papacy* first, and most, and as inexcusable as incorrigible, tho' there are Faults on the other side too, both inexcusable, and too much incorrigible;

ble; so that of all the Mischief they are the Authors; Where is now that Undivided, Undeiled, Infallible Church of Christ upon Earth? Should the rest be all excluded, we might well conclude that of *Rome*, with her Adherents, to be the Faithful City become an Harlot, the *Great Whore*, and the *Time of Gentiles* to be fulfilled: And should we judge of many of their Agents according to the Judgment of our Lord himself, we cannot think them other than such a Sect of *Christian Pharisees*, deeply tainted with their Leaven, and acted by a like false Zeal, as were those of the *Jews* before their Destruction. We may add to this, as they began all this Mischief, so their *Trent Impositions* is a principal Cause of the Continuance. And this alone might have satisfied the Bishop's Wonder, why such an Author can never approve such *Terms of Communion* by any Subscription, much less by Swearing to them; which 'tis a Wonder to me if so learned a Prelate can so far approve, as not to wish they had never been imposed.

This I suppose is sufficient Answer to so much of the Letter as is in Print; but because it has respect to something of the *Doctor's Works*, which I confess I have not yet had the Opportunity to peruse, nor does he there refer to any particular Passages of them; yet since I understand he hath

* elsewhere done that, and refers to *Defens. Fid. Nic. Proœm. Sect. 2.* I shall not decline a fair Answer to that also.

* *Hist. des Variations*
lib. 15. §.
103. p. 593.

It is not necessary to recite the whole Section, for there is nothing in it, but what is grounded upon the last Words of *St. Matthew's Gospel*, our Saviour's Promise, *And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.* And to this I say, 1. That his Promise is performed by his Presence, as well in the Execution of Judgment for Correction, as in the Favours of Preservation, Deliverance, and Assistance. 2. That it was general to all; and therefore none could by any thing in it pretend to any special Privilege; but what hath been done, or permitted to be done, in respect of any

one.

one part, may as well be in respect of any other. 3. Notorious Matter of Fact hath long since disproved their Sense and Interpretation of this Promise; and particularly as to the Church of *Rome*: A Succession of *Fifty Popes* together, rather Apostatick than Apostolick, by their own Confession, and so many General Councils who have erred or contradicted one another, is considerable Evidence against it. 4. The Predictions of our Saviour before his Passion, *Luk. 21. 24.* his Answer to his Apostles after his Resurrection, *Act. 1.* the Warning given by *St. Paul* to the *Romans*, *Rom. 11.* and the Revelation to *St. John*, *Rev. 17.* after his Ascension, do all afford remarkable Matter against it. And lastly, the Preservation of Unity and Agreement in the Foundation and most necessary Superstructure upon it, does fully answer the Promise. And from all this it appears, that what is taught to the People (amongst us) concerning the Infallibility of what they call the Church, that otherwise Christ should not be true to his Word, is not only Sophistry, Fallacy, and false, but little less, if less, than Blasphemy. And indeed, if what is truly *Popery*, be well distinguish'd from what is truly *Catholick*, it will appear all a meer Abuse of genuine Christianity, a Mystery of Iniquity, and one of the greatest Impostures in the World.

And now, if this be not enough to satisfy that learned Prelate, I hope either the learned Doctor, or his learned Editor, will in something or other take occasion to do it more compleatly; if they think not fit to write on purpose. But in the mean time it affords me a fair occasion to propose *some things for the Consideration of that Reverend Prelate*, both in respect to himself, and in respect to the Clergy of *France*, especially in some of their Assemblies.

He seems in this Letter very sincere and candid, and free from that Pharisaical, sower Leaven, with which many Roman Catholics, at least among us, and I think in *France* too, are too deeply infected; and therefore I could wish that these few things were taken into Consideration by him. 1. Whe-

1. Whether it be not a matter of greater Wonder than that mentioned by him, that two Persons of so much Learning, and Sincerity too, as we will suppose, should so differ in Judgment concerning so great matters, as was the Occasion of his Wonder; and that the Occasions of such Difference is not better consider'd, and more proper and effectual Means used for the Removal of them, and for the Composure of such Differences in the Church of Christ?

2. Whether to use any thing of *Fraud or Deceit in Matters of Religion*, be not both contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and to the Practice of the Apostles and Primitive Christians, and scandalous to the most Holy Christian Religion, and especially to many such as are not well acquainted with such ancient Matter of Fact, and the Moral Evidences of its Truth and Divinity, inclining them to suspect the like from the beginning; and that very Sin upon which our Saviour hath pronounced so dreadful a Judgment?

3. Whether his endeavour to maintain the Lawfulness of *Communion in one kind*, and denial of one part of the Holy Sacrament to the Laity in Publick Assemblies; and to do it by the Testimonies of *Leo and Gelasius*; be not fraudulent and deceitful in his own Conscience, and as he will answer it to Almighty God, the Searcher of all Hearts; and in divers respects; in Misconstruction of the Testimonies, and Misapplication of that Misconstruction, as sufficient Proof of the Authority of the Catholick Church; which, had it been a true Construction, had proved but the Practice of a particular Church, and at that time only; being never heard of before or after, either there or any where else, and therefore contrary to the Practice of the whole Catholick Church, (except in their Communion since the Innovation sufficiently known) to this day?

4. Whether this be not a double, or rather a triple Sin, both by maintaining an unjust Innovation, and by unlawful Means, and also for an evil End, at least of mischievous consequence,

sequence, tending to support a usurped Authority upon the Rights of all National Churches, to the Disturbance of the true Catholick Church, and to invalidate the Authority of our Saviour's Institutions, and set up that usurped Authority above all: and such Sin as deserves and requires some kind of *Publick Penance*, or Satisfaction for its Expiation?

5. Whether from hence may not be perceived *the true Cause of that wonderful Difference* beforementioned, *viz.* from either a *false Principle* once admitted, *viz.* concerning Infallibility, or *Misapplication* of a true one; and a false or mistaken Zeal, commonly instigated by subtle, evil Powers, under the specious appearance of a good End, or for the Service of God, or of his Church, to what is most disserviceable? But what is now said, is but one Instance of what more might be produced.

AS for the **CLERGY OF FRANCE**, it is not so much Presumption as Duty and Obligation for me, a private Person, to take notice of their Actions. For as I have as high an Esteem for them, as for any Clergy in the World; so have I made a *Publick Declaration* in Print of my *Desire of Communion*, not only with all Catholick Churches in general, but with them in particular; which I do again hereby declare; but only in what is *truly Catholick*, and upon *true Catholick Terms*: And therefore I think it my Duty on the other side, to declare my Apprehensions of what I think not so, as I meet with proper Occasion. And upon this I must needs say, that I have *more than One thing, which I wonder at* in them.

1. That so learned a Clergy, as they of *France*, can believe that *the Assembly at Trent* should be assisted by the Spirit of Truth in Matters of Faith, and not be assisted by the Spirit of Holiness in Matters of Righteousness and Discipline: And therefore, why they do not either wholly receive it, or wholly reject it; especially if there be in it any thing declared to be of Faith, without sufficient Authority of
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Sacred Scripture, or of Apostolick Tradition, or false or fallacious and deceitful, as I verily think there is; and since it is not received to this day in the greatest part of the truly Catholick Church, but only in what they call so.

2. That they do not proceed more catholickly and regularly, in asserting the *Rights of the Catholick Church* first; and by Christian Principles, which are common to all; and their own as included, rather than the *Liberties of the Gallican Church* only, as peculiar to themselves, and by Principles of civil Consideration, against Papal Usurpations. As Divine Rights are not to be denied; so neither are Usurpations to be complied with, even upon our Neighbours, especially in a common Cause, and against Divine Right: Nor Rights to be maintained by indirect or improper Principles.

3. That, since it is a principal and indispensable *Condition of being Christ's Disciples* indeed, and much more requisite in his Ministers and Officers, to take up their Cross, and to part with all, even Life it self, for Him, and his Word; and the Deserting his Service and Duty thro' *Shame or Fear*, is threatned with Confusion and a dreadful Judgment at the Great Day, they do not more constantly assert, and more faithfully exercise *their Episcopal Authority* derived to them from the Commission of our Lord to his Apostles, over all Persons within their proper Precincts; see that the *Regulars* keep to their own Profession, Rules, and Vows, and meddle not with what does not properly belong to them; and admonish the *Civil Magistrates* to shew themselves Christians indeed by Protecting and Defending Christ's Authority in his Church against all Antichristian Pretences of Papal Exemptions and other Usurpations.

4. That, upon the same Consideration, they do not more constantly assert the Rights of Christ's Church against the *Usurpations and Encroachments of the Civil Powers*, and more faithfully exercise the Authority of Christ committed to them in free and plain Admonitions of their Duty to their

Lord in his Ministers and Officers, if they will be Christians indeed, and not forfeit the Benefit of their Profession, and incur greater Condemnation by their Unfaithfulness to it beside.

5. That, since our Saviour hath denounced Judgment against all, by whom *Offences* do come, or who *offend one of those little ones*, who believe in him, they do not remove those *needless Offences*, if not *inexcusable*, as many learned Men firmly believe; such as the Scriptures and the Offices of the Church in a *Language not understood* by the People, the *Holy Communion in one kind only*, &c. but suffer great Numbers of People, of all Degrees, for whose Souls they must answer, to be expos'd to such *Temptations* of Sinning against their Conscience, or Suffering for it if they do not; and the *Authority of the State* to be so *exposed* to Censure of Tyranny over the Consciences of Christian People by Severities in such doubtful Matters.

It is not only their Learning, but their *Piety* also, for which I have such respect for the Clergy of *France*, in general: And that moves me the more willingly to take notice of these things. For as I have a great Kindness for all sincere, pious People; so am I most apt to be concerned for them in such matters as I apprehend not well consistent with true *Piety* in them. Many sincere People may be good Proficients in Christ's School, and yet not so perfect as not to be compassed with *Infirmity*; but they must strive for Perfection, lest they come short of Salvation, like the foolish Virgins and unfaithful Servant. And besides what I have noted already, there is *another Warning* given by our Saviour, very necessary to be well consider'd by pious People, that they do not deceive themselves with *insufficient Profession and Practice* of Religion: *Many, saith he, will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never*
knew

knew you: Depart from me, ye who work Iniquity, Mat. 7. 22, 23. These were Professors of no ordinary Form, and yet dismissed as we see; and for Iniquity; which what it is, may be understood by his Discourse recorded Matt. 25. which is all concerning Professors, and a most proper Comment upon this Text: and nothing charged against any of them but mere Unfaithfulness, in not discharging their Duty. And if the Condemnation of such shall be what is there described, how much greater shall be the Condemnation of such as misemploy their Masters Goods, and abuse his sincere and faithful Servants! There may be great Heats and Flights of Devotion, which may be but like the stony Ground, Matt. 13. 5, 6, 20, 21. but the Trial of true Devotion is Faithfulness, Rev. 2. 10. Our Saviour has promised great things to them, who forsake the things of this World for him; and therefore they who will forsake him in the due discharge of their Duty to him, for the things of this World, which are but for a moment, may expect a proportionable just Recompence of Reward.

If the great Matters wherein the poor Sufferers agree both with the Holy Scriptures and the Catholick Church in all Ages; And the Matters wherein they differ with those of the Roman Communion of these latter Ages; And the Reasons they have on their side in divers of the Differences; And that they suffer merely for Conscience sake: If all this be well considered, the Severity will hardly be justifiable in common Humanity, or true civil Policy, but not at all by the genuine Principles of Christianity, even by a humane Judgment; and if the Judgment of God be consider'd, what can be expected but like Severity from his Righteous Judgment? And tho' it be executed by Civil Authority, yet the Original of all may be imputed to the Clergy, for a twofold Neglect, both of removing Occasion, and of better Information and Perswasion to the State. Nay, the State it self may impute the Disturbance by Differences in Religion

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to the Unfaithfulness of the Clergy, and require Satisfaction of them, but principally of the Papacy. And to me, it seems very plain, that all the Evil in the World is justly chargeable upon the Corruption and Unfaithfulness of those who occupie the place of Christ's Ministers and Officers.

And now, tho' I think I ought not to neglect my Right of just Claim and Demand of Communion in any part of the Catholick Church, yet these are such things, as I think I ought not to forbear to disown any Approbation of them. And having done that, I may notwithstanding claim my Right to Communion with the Church of *France* upon my *Profession of Faith*, and particularly with the Bishop of *Meaux*, as I do hereby, if he please to take notice of this Paper, and to be treated by him as a Catholick; or that he shew sufficient Reasons to the contrary. And for that purpose shall

* *A true Account of the Unaccountable Dealings of some Roman Catholick Missioners of this Nation for seducing Profelytes from the Simplicity of the Gospel to the Roman Mystery of Iniquity.*

here repeat part of what I have said in the Conclusion of what is lately published,* "That I do declare, and solemnly profess, That if any, of either side, can satisfie me, by any good Argument, that I do vary in any thing of Faith, of Practice, or of Discipline, from the plain and certain Rule of the Ancients, (recorded by *Vincentius Lirinensis*, and generally approved by Learned and Judicious Men ever since) or the Catholick Church of the most unexceptionable times, I will thank them for it, and speedily rectifie it.

And this I hope does sufficiently clear me from all Guilt or just Imputation of either Heresie or Schism; and leave the Guilt upon them who refuse me. I was told by one, who gave me a Visit at *Cane-Wood*, that he had seen all my Papers in the Study of a Doctor of *Sorbon*; and therefore I hope this may come to their Hands also; whereby I shall experiment whether they of *France* be of the same Spirit and Principles with our Roman Catholick Missioners here.

